

Home Inspections



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The inspection clause of Colorado's standard home purchase contract gives homebuyers the right to conduct inspections of the property that they are purchasing. As a homebuyer, you may be wondering what inspections to have done. The answer partly depends on the property.

For all homes and condominiums, a general home inspection should be conducted. These inspections typically take two to four hours and include an assessment of plumbing, electrical, heating, appliances, roof and structure. The inspector notes safety hazards and deficiencies. Even in new construction homes, which need to pass government inspections to get a certificate allowing occupancy, home inspectors find problems that have been overlooked.

The inspector will point out any issues that need further investigation. If there are structural concerns, the inspector may recommend a structural engineer to be called in. If there is mold, a test can be done to see if the type of mold present is a health hazard. If there is evidence of pest infestation, a pest inspection may be recommended.

Choose your home inspector carefully. Colorado does not license home inspectors. It is safest to use an inspector who has errors and omissions insurance, and is certified by an organization that has stringent requirements for membership, such as the American Society of Home Inspectors (ASHI).

Colorado homes often have radon levels that exceed the level designated as acceptable by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). A radon test can be conducted or arranged by the home inspector. If the radon level is high, it can usually be reduced to acceptable levels by radon mitigation procedures.

Homes built prior to 1978 may have lead-based paint, and by law sellers of these homes have to disclose if they know of lead-based paint in the home. Homebuyers have the option to test for the presence of lead. (Many of us grew up in homes that had lead-based paint, and use that as an excuse for our strange behavior.) For more information on environmental hazards such as radon, mold and lead, go to the EPA Web site, www.epa.gov. End with the issue you want to investigate, such as www.epa.gov/lead.

Rural and mountain homes generally have water wells and septic systems. I recommend testing the quality of the well water, and having an inspection to evaluate the storage capacity and productivity of the well. The septic system should be inspected to determine if it is functioning properly.

Some homebuyers may choose to have additional tests done, based on their sensitivities and preferences. You may want to check for EMFs (Electromagnetic fields) or to hire a Feng Shui practitioner.

Your buyer's agent can help you determine what inspections are appropriate for the property you are purchasing, and can recommend qualified inspectors.

Rosanne Kolodenko is a Realtor and the Broker/Owner of her local, independent real estate company. She is an Exclusive Buyer Agent, and her company is an Exclusive Buyer Office, representing only homebuyers and working as their advocate. Rosanne is an officer of the Colorado Exclusive Buyer Agents Association. She serves Boulder County and the surrounding area. You can contact her at 303.447.1112 or Rosanne@BoulderBuyerAgent.com, or visit www.BoulderBuyerAgent.com.